

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY D/HA/PW:FASIEVERTS:JS

APPROVED BY EA - MR. HABIB

EA - MR. MILLER

DOD/ISA - DR. SHIELDS

EA/VN - MR. PETERS

S/S- RKUCHEL

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 205880

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: VN, US, PFOR

SUBJECT:RETURN OF REMAINS FROM DRV

REF: PARIS 20875

1. EMBOFF SHOULD CONVEY FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO DRV REPRESENTATIVE IN RESPONSE TO DRV'S 13 AUGUST NEGATIVE POSITION ON REPATRIATION OF REMAINS OF THREE US PILOTS:

-- A. AS WE INFORMED YOU AUGUST 12, USG APPRECIATED DRV'S READINESS TO REPATRIATE THE REMAINS OF THE THREE PILOTS AS STATED IN YOUR MESSAGE OF AUGUST 9.

-- B. ON THE BASIS OF THAT MESSAGE WE INFORMED THE FAMILIES OF THE THREE PILOTS OF THE RETURN OF THE REMAINS OF THEIR LOVED ONES, AND WE REMAIN READY TO COOPERATE IN ARRANGEMENTS TO ACCOMPLISH THIS ASAP.

-- C. USG REGRETS DRV'S FURTHER MESSAGE OF AUGUST 13 STATING THAT THE REPATRIATION OF THE REMAINS OF THE THREE

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PILOTS CANNOT BE IMPLEMENTED AT THIS TIME. THIS IS A

SIMPLE HUMANITARIAN MATTER WHICH SHOULD NOT BE LINKED TO OTHER ISSUES AND WHICH SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO PROCEED ASAP.

-- D. USG REMAINS READY TO SEND AN AIRCRAFT TO HANOI TO COLLECT THE REMAINS, OR TO DISCUSS OTHER APPROPRIATE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THIS PURPOSE.

-- E. WE ALSO REMAIN CONCERNED ABOUT THE LARGE NUMBER OF AMERICAN PERSONNEL WHO ARE UNACCOUNTED FOR IN VIETNAM AND AGAIN REQUEST THE DRV TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THESE MEN AND TO RETURN THE REMAINS OF THE DEAD.

2. FYI, DRV ALSO INFORMED MRS. CORA WEISS, LONG-TIME PEACE ACTIVIST WHO HEADED "COMMITTEE OF LIAISON" WITH US PRISONERS IN NVN, OF AUG. 9 MESSAGE, AND MRS. WEISS APPARENTLY AT THE TIME INFORMED NY TIMES. TIMES QUERIED DEPARTMENT AND WE CONFIRMED RECEIPT OF AUG. 9 MESSAGE, BUT TO OUR KNOWLEDGE NO STORY EVER APPEARED. WE DO NOT KNOW IF MRS. WEISS RECEIVED AUG. 13 NEGATIVE MESSAGE, AND THERE HAS BEEN NO FURTHER PRESS QUERY. FAMILIES OF THE THREE PILOTS HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF THE AUG. 9 MESSAGE AND, IN GENERAL TERMS, OF THE AUG. 13 REVERSAL. END FYI. THERE WAS BRIEF STORY IN CHRIS. SCIENCE MONITOR ON AUG. 9 OFFER BUT NO FOLLOW-UP THUS FAR. INGERSOLL

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